



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MRS. AUSTIN'S LIFE OF JESUS

SIR,—My attention has been called to an editorial in a recent issue of the *Baptist World* of Louisville, Ky., in which that publication comments adversely upon my *Life of Jesus* now running serially in the *REVIEW*. Under the title, "Traditional Modernism," the *Baptist World* holds forth as follows:

This phrase ["Traditional Modernism"] occurs to us in reading "The Man Jesus," by Mrs. Mary Austin, in the June *NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW*. It is the first of a series of articles that have been extensively heralded as the great modern life of Jesus Christ. There is no reason *per se* why a woman should not be able to write a great life of Jesus. It is a task that calls for a combination of qualities not easily found. Mrs. Austin has distinction of style, force, imagination, insight. But the total effect of the two opening chapters is not happy. The writer has read widely in modern criticism and in the history of the first century, but her tread is not always secure and her vision is often faulty. She frankly takes the position that Jesus is the son of Joseph and considers the birth-stories in Matthew and Luke as legends, "God-tales," as she calls them, without historical value. She plays fast and loose with the gospels, uses what she likes, rejects the rest with no rhyme or reason of historical criticism. Take this sentence about John the Baptist as a specimen: "This John—called The Baptist—must have been a Galilean, an inhabitant of that portion of the Bridge which reached from the roots of Lebanon past Naphtali, past Tabor and Hermon, past the plain of Esdraelon, stretching to the narrow Phœnician coast, down the Rift of Jordan to the dead, desert sea." We pass by the curious topography whereby the Dead Sea is placed on the edge of Galilee. For the notion that John the Baptist is a Galilean, in the face of Luke's express statement that he was born in the Hill Country of Judea, Mrs. Austin gives this evidence: "For this assumption we have the natural temper of his mind, and the fact that he was amenable to the civil authority of Herod, Tetrarch of Galilee." But Machaerus was in Perea, not Galilee. We know that John crossed over into Perea from Judea to Bethany beyond Jordan. It was probably while in Perea that John fell into the hands of Herod, that Fox, who was used by the Pharisees as a "scarecrow" for Jesus when in this same region. But the most striking instance of whimsical traditionalism in the midst of rampant modernism is in this sentence: "Then there was this interesting new ritual of the sprinkling of water—it was a poor Jew, indeed, who could not make room in his life for one more ceremonial."

With charming naïveté Mrs. Austin has a blind-eye for modern scholarship and planks down the medieval development of sprinkling for baptism

as the undoubted rite of John the Baptist. There is never a doubt or a qualm of conscience for Mrs. Austin. She knows her mind about everything, cuts out what does not suit her theories like the most approved modern critic, falls back upon her traditional prejudices when she pleases, and has her own sweet will at every turn. The facts? Why bother about the facts? That is tiresome. Read this, for instance: "A Young Jew, something under thirty, of the better class of working-men, by name Joshua Ben Joseph, receiving the rite of baptism from a wild Anchorite on the mud-banks of a muddy river." It is all so picturesque, so realistic, so cock-sure, so full of detail that it seems a pity to challenge this charming novelist who essays to tell us all that is left by modern knowledge in the story of Jesus of Nazareth. The tone is confident, and the style is piquant, and the result a wholly whimsical Christ. The pity of it all is that such a series of chapters appears in *THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW* as the last word in scholarly research. It suits far better one of the popular monthlies of romance. Take this picture of Jesus: "One thinks of him going about, tall and personable—a figure, at least, of which none ever complained of any lack—free striding, and a Jew, mind you; a high-nosed Jew with an eye at once piercing and veiled, long-haired and bearded." If one demur at the word "long-haired," in view of Paul's condemnation of long hair as a custom for men, Mrs. Austin has this to say in reply: "The hair and the beard have become so fixed in tradition that, whether or no, we must accept them." Thus we have a frank medley of tradition and modernism. The Roman Catholic artists have so familiarized the world with the picture of a long-haired Christ that Mrs. Austin does not dare to put it otherwise. The atmosphere in which she moves is so used to sprinkling as baptism that she dares to say "sprinkling" of John's baptism in utter disregard of the meaning of the Greek word. In spite of the fact that Jesus was baptized in the River Jordan and came up out of the water, Mrs. Austin blandly informs us that he was sprinkled on the muddy banks of the muddy river. Perhaps her articles may secure an audience for the story of Jesus in quarters that pay little attention to the Man of Nazareth. If so, some good may be done. But it is a great pity that, having taken what trouble she did to learn, she did not take more pains and learn more.

I have read this attack with interest, also with some amusement and a little sadness. Naturally I was prepared to be assailed touching the doctrines of modern sectarianism, and find it highly characteristic that more should be made of a point concerning the rite of baptism than of my rejection of the Gospel story of the birth of Jesus.

In writing this *Life* the problem of authenticating my choice among the varying concepts of scholars on certain points, gave me much concern, and was finally resolved by my conviction that what the modern reader wants is an unprejudiced picture of Jesus re-vitalized from the history and humanity of his time, rather than by scholarly disquisition.

I was not unaware that to give the quality called "style" to a work of this character is always to impeach its scholarship in some quarters. But I reflected that with the spread of University education, the processes of erudition have become too familiar to need to be continually brought into court.

I therefore addressed my work to this demand rather than to those to whom, unfamiliar with modern methods, my conclusions will seem, as they do to the Editor of the *Baptist World*, "without rhyme or reason of historic criticism."

And if I offer no particular items of scholarship in support of my point of view, it is only fair to add, neither does the Editor of the *Baptist World*.

Moreover, he is even guilty of what seems a deliberate misreading of my text, since I do not say that Galilee extended to the Dead Sea, but only that John was an "inhabitant of the portion of the Bridge which reacheddown the Rift of Jordan to the dead, desert sea." Also one sees a certain bias come out in the offense taken at my description of the pilgrim camps and the preaching and baptizing as taking place on the "banks of a muddy river."

I should have been glad to accommodate this prejudice by a picture of John and his audience up to their necks in the Jordan, but candor obliges me to confess that at the season indicated by the accepted chronology, this would have been an exceedingly difficult proceeding. However, I have no wish to disturb any Christian sect on a point of doctrine. My reason for speaking as I do of John's baptizing was owing largely to my being unable to find a warrant for believing that Jesus himself attached any importance to the method of the rite. We know only by inference that any of his disciples were baptized, and he himself is said not to have baptized anyone.

As to the citizenship of John, having rejected Luke's story of his birth and relationship to Jesus, I saw no reason for assigning him to Judea, even though he might have been born there. The temper of his mind was Galilean, and he certainly came under the jurisdiction of Herod. Luke also says that Jesus was born in Judea, but he was always accounted a citizen of Galilee.

In nothing does my critic illustrate the shallowness of modern sectarianism so much as in his attitude toward my description of the personal appearance of Jesus. "Why bother about the facts?" he says. "Facts are tiresome"; and proceeds to prove it by anathematizing my picture, without any basis of fact at all, as "Roman Catholic." Unfortunately, his suggestion that St. Paul condemned long hair for men works the other way, for Saint Paul denied for the early church many Hebraic practices which were undoubtedly followed by Jesus. Indeed, it is not unlikely that his itemizing of long hair might have grown out of some sporadic attempt to follow a fashion known to have been used by Jesus, for among the Jews it was customary for those who felt themselves especially called of God to cut neither the hair nor the beard.

But long before there was any distinction of Catholic or non-Catholic, before even the church was particularly Romanized, the tradition of Jesus as a man with long hair and a beard had become fixed in Christian art. Naturally one of the first questions asked of the Apostolic Missionaries would have been as to the bodily appearance of the Beloved Master. Portraiture was common, and though the Jews made no images, there is no reason why Gentile converts may not have made them, even while there were living men by whose memory such representations could have been corrected.

I have examined every claim to authenticity in the graphic presentations of Jesus, from the inscriptions on the Catacombs to the Holy Coat of Trèves, and while it is impossible to lend one's self to all the legendary inferences, I could only come to the conclusion that long hair and a beard were actual items of his appearance.

Since the Editor of the *Baptist World* gives me a warrant for it in his amiable regret that, having learned so much of Jesus, I "did not take the

trouble to learn more," let me express the wish that all sectaries might take the trouble to learn a little more of Jesus' real attitude toward those who offered "a cup of cold water in my name," and his condemnation of just such strictures as have been pronounced against me and my work.

MARY AUSTIN.

NEW YORK CITY.

SIR,—At last I have to abandon the commonplace, "I never read serials," for I have begun one—the first in many years, my interest having been aroused by the announcement of Mrs. Austin's "The Man Jesus."

I read avidly not the Testament tale of a Saviour, not disputatious theology, but a human history, the story of a man, his time and his people. When the second instalment came I read it with no less interest, and I anticipate the pleasure of the remainder with equal eagerness.

It is a narrative that fits this day and is certain to evoke a warm response, irrespective of readers' religious beliefs.

NEW YORK CITY.

B. W. HUEBSCH.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S "ENGLAND"

SIR,—Houston Stewart Chamberlain should make his permanent residence Berlin; his conceptions of "political liberty" are of the Wilhelmstrasse variety. Too sad for poor Houston that he is annoyed by the fable of "political liberty" as he finds it in Britain!

Speaking as an American citizen, born in Scotland, you may tell Houston that when I forswore my allegiance to the late Queen Victoria, at the same time swearing allegiance to the United States, I *gained nothing* in a purely political sense, my gain being *economic*.

Chamberlain's article is just so much pro-German fol-de-rol, prejudiced, biased, and altogether unfair, as well as untruthful. His attempt to compare "modern Athens" (Edinburgh) with ancient Athens is absurd; his analogy will not span; even an humble hotel-keeper knows better.

Edinburgh is my native city; we can therefore consider it as good an example as any. Gladstone was member of Parliament for the county of Edinburgh; he certainly cannot be accused of belonging to any branch of British nobility, nor did any of the members representing Edinburgh City get their seats in the House of Commons as a consequence of being "younger" or "eldest" sons of British noblemen.

The writer is surprised to find in such a splendid review as the NORTH AMERICAN such a mess of vicious untruths. By the way, didn't Houston marry a German brewer's daughter, or something of this sort, who gave lavishly of his wealth, "made in America," to the "All Highest"? The writer's wife is also a native of Germany, but in spite of the fact that she has her eldest brother, Herr Doktor Professor Reinhardt, and his two sons, splendid men the three of them, wearing the "Kaiser's Coat," she *couldn't* sympathize with the gang of murderers who have so ably, up to this writing, deluded the German people that they are fighting for the "Fatherland"—not for all the millions of the aforesaid brewer father-in-law of Houston.

Scotsmen, at least, do not require to go anywhere so far as "political liberty" is concerned, least of all to Germany or any of her mercenary propagandists. Chamberlain is wilfully lying, and if he has enjoyed the privilege of living at any time within the confines of the British Isles, he